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A series of workshops for foster parents in Georgia was held, using the facilities of the counties' continuing education programs. Most of the attendants were foster mothers, primarily because the sessions were held during daytime hours. Films and readings were used to stimulate discussion of child care and development, and of particular problems of children who are separated from their own parents. The sessions were informal and the foster parents were particularly interested in discussing care of premature infants, discipline, adolescents, and health care. Evaluative comments were solicited and received from some of the participants for use in planning future sessions. (Document includes bibliography, film list, workshop working papers, and newspaper publicity.) (mf)

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TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

WITH FOSTER PARENTS

A Report on Workshop for Foster Parents

Under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965

DEVELOPED BY

WEST GEORGIA COLLEGE

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CHILDRENS SERVICES

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REGIONAL OFFICE OF FAMILY AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES, HEW

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This publication represents the cooperative experiences of members of the West Georgia College faculty, Georgia Department of Family and Children Services, Georgia Department of Public Health, Cobb County Health Department and Social and Rehabiliation Services, Department of Health, Education and Welfare in their efforts to implement constructive ideas in working with Foster Parents and in the improvement of their work with children in foster homes.

Dr. James Wittman, Jr., former Head of the Sociology Department, Henry Dufour, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Dr. John M. Martin, Associate Dean and former Chairman of the Division of Social Sciences and Collus O. Johnson, Director of Continuing Education provided ideas and leadership in developing the proposal and in initiating and conducting this program.

The Division of Children and Youth, Georgia Department of Family and Children Services also made significant contributions in planning, organizing and teaching. Members of the Department were instrumental in supporting the project; suggesting methods of approach and guidelines; providing effective leadership by planning places to meet and inviting persons to participate. Persons contributing to the project were: T. M. Parham, Former Director; Wellborn Ellis, Director; Bertha Roberts, former Chief of Child Welfare Section; Gladys Heath, Child Welfare Consultant and Nancy Pendergraft, Child Welfare Consultant; Child Welfare Field Representatives, Martha Ann Taylor and Patsy Luther; participating County Directors and their staffs; and foster parents who participated.

James K. Vaughn, Assistant Regional Representative of Family and Child Welfare Services, Social and Rehabilitation Service, Department of Health, Education and Welfare and Lillian P. Warnick, M. D., Specialized Consultant Physician, Child Health Services, Georgia Department of Public Health served as instructors and consultants for this project.

The Department of Continuing Education, West Georgia College served as cosponsor and coordinator and performed many administrative and other functions necessary to the success of this project.

Fred Parsons, ACSW
Director of the Project

I. Introduction

Workshop for Foster Parents is one of fifteen proposals under Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, submitted by West Georgia College and approved by the Georgia Community Continuing Education Service, State Agency: University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia in 1966, 1967, and 1968. As an Area Community Continuing Education Center, the Department of Continuing Education at West Georgia College served as coordinator of these projects. They were designed by individual faculty members and units of the college to work with communities on the solution of community problems. This was a natural outgrowth of the interest and experience of the college and of individual members of the faculty in working with communities over the years.

During the summer of 1966, a proposal was developed by the Department of Sociology, Division of Social Sciences, and was subsequently approved by the State Agency: University of Georgia. At this time Fred Parsons, Assistant Professor of Sociology was working on special assignment with the State Department of Family and Children Services. Since West Georgia College and the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services were both concerned with the problems of foster parents it was natural for Professor Parsons to provide leadership in this project.

A meeting was held with the Division for Children and Youth, State Department of Family and Children Services in the fall of 1966, to discuss specific plans and to implement the project. T. M. Parham, Mrs. Bertha Roberts, Miss Gladys Heath, and Fred Parsons participated in this meeting. It was agreed that a meeting with County Directors of Family and Children Services of the five counties designated in the proposal including Douglas

County, Miss Gladys Heath, and Fred Parsons, the Director of the project, would be held at West Georgia College. At this meeting which was held shortly thereafter, suggestions for the location of the workshop, each phase, content, methods and procedures were determined and evaluated. Douglasville was choosen for the first phase because this county had more than 15 foster homes. Dr. Lillian Warnick, James Vaughn, and Miss Gladys Heath participated as consultants in this program. The college made funds available for the purchase of materials since both Dr. Lillian Warnick and James Vaughn were able to offer their services as instructor without charge to the project.

Meetings were held prior to each phase with Miss Nancy Pendergraft, James Vaughn and Dr. Lillian Warnick to discuss the content, schedule, location, participants and goals. An evaluation session was held following each phase.

Workshop for Foster Parents consisted of four phases:

I. Organizing and planning the workshop.

II. Workshop for Foster Parents at Douglas County Courthouse in Douglasville.

III. Workshop for Foster Parents at Cobb County Health Department in Marietta.

IV. Workshop for County Workers at the City Hall in Villa Rica.

Two additional phases were designed to aid in following up on the original plan and/or the evaluation.

V. Publication of a summary report and evaluation.

VI. Workshop for workers with Foster Parents and with Foster Parents using the publication as a basis for study and discussion.

The Joint effort of the college and the Department of Family and Children Services on the state and local levels has been a valuable experience. As a result, the efforts of all concerned with foster parents have been strengthened and children in foster homes are receiving improved care.

II. Report on Workshop for Foster Parents

A. Participants

1. The first phase of the workshop was attended only by foster parents from Douglas County. Of a possible nineteen local foster parents, nine active foster mothers and one former foster mother attended. The possibility of the foster parents workshop was made available to the Cobb County Department of Family and Children Services which had fifty-one active foster parents and fifteen foster parent applicants. The county department was responsible for contacting all foster home parents and applicants and for issuing invitations to the workshop with an explanation of what would be involved for the foster parents. In this phase of the workshop a plan for baby sitting was established so that parents of small children would be able to participate. The program was again held during office hours and only one foster fateher, a retired elderly man, attended. Seventeen foster mothers and one foster father received the certificate from West Georgia College. Two of the sixteen foster mothers were applicants at the time of the Workshop and the other fourteen were working in foster homes with approved status. Attendance at both phases of the workshop was consistent with most participating members attending all sessions.

2. Characteristics of the Foster Mothers Attending the Workshops

Of the 26 foster mothers in attendance during the workshops, the ages varied from 21 years to over 60 years. They were as follows:

21 years to 30 years	4
31 years to 40 years	4
41 years to 50 years	9
51 years to 60 years	6
61 years and over	1
Unknown	2

It is obvious from these figures that the majority of the foster parents taking part in both phases of the program were beyond child-bearing years. They represented families whose own children were in their teens or independent. The number of natural children within the foster families ranged from three children to two families with four children.

No Children	3
1 Child	7
2 Children	6
3 Children	6
4 Children	2
Unknown	2

This makes it obvious that the majority of the foster mothers who attended the workshop had the experience of caring for their own children. Education of the foster parents varied from two foster mothers with less than a sixth grade education to a foster mother with a high school diploma. There were no foster mothers in the group with any college education. The figures on education are as follows:

Less than 6 years	2
Less than 12 years	10
High School graduation	12
Unknown	2

There was a very wide range in terms of length of service as foster mothers. Foster parents had cared for from two to more than fifty children in their years of work as foster parents.

B. Objectives

The overall objective of this workshop was to provide a learning experience for foster parents, in a five county area of Georgia, that would result in a greater appreciation for, awareness of, and

dedication to providing care for children who are separated from their own families.

Specific Objectives included:

1. Deepen understanding of the purpose of foster family care for children who are deprived, neglected and/or abandoned.

2. Increase knowledge of the principles underlying child care.

3. Expand knowledge of what constitutes acceptable standards of performance as a substitute parent.

4. Increase parent's ability to understand the causes of behavior - that all behavior is purposeful.

5. Develop skills in caring for children from infancy through adolescence.

6. Improve cooperation as a team member in assesing children's problems, method of handling and evaluating children's readiness to move into new experiences.

C. Content

The series of six workshop session for foster parents was divided into two distinct areas i. e., Child Development and Child Care. The first and sixth sessions were combined with limited materials from both areas being shared. Of the three groups participating in the course, two began with the Child Development Curriculum and one with the child care. We concluded that the Child Development materials logically came first and appeared to offer more continuity in the learning process.

L. Child Care

Although there were only three <u>full</u> sessions devoted to child care practices it was possible to include content materials in both the initial and final sessions as well. Approximately ten hours were utilized in the presentation and discussion of child care materials. A film entitle, "The Lostling" was introduced at the opening

session.[1] This film served as a guide for an ensuing discussion on the role of the foster parent. To encourage involvement and to feret out individual concepts on the foster parent role, listening groups were assigned to report on impressions as to the roles carried by the various film personalities. Roles of foster parents, social worker, the child and the natural parents were assigned to group members. Time did not permit full discussion from each group as we found in each instance ready response and an eagerness to discuss the roles played in detail.

An assignment was made during the initial session. In the kit of materials provided was a Signet Book, The Story of Sandy.[2] All participants were asked to read the book and one volunteer was named to review for the next session. The Story of Sandy is a true story of a deeply disturbed little boy who found a measure of love and security through the care and training of dedicated foster parents. The foster parents related quickly and positively to this example of what constitutes good foster parenting and it evoked many helpful comments and citations of good practice during the remaining sessions.

The first full session on child care was devoted to the topic of "The Foster Parent in Today's World".[3] The leader gave a brief overview of the history of foster family care and the changes that have occured over a period of years.

Following up the film critique, the foster parents discussed their own concept of their role and cited examples of the satisfying components of their job as well as the unsatisfying ones. This

1. See appendices for film discussion outline
2. See Bibliography - Material for Participants
3. See appendices for Complete outline of the session.

discussion evoked both positive and negative comments that were used to highlight responsibilities normally assumed by foster parents and those appearing to be unrealistic in terms of expectation. We emphasized the qualities that appeared to be necessary and desirable for the parenting task.

Recognition was given to the foster parent as a member of the Child care team. Brief examples were cited on how foster parents and workers plan together in behalf of children. Personal examples supporting the team approach to child care were volunteered by the parents and this added to the discussion.

A preview of the next weeks's discussion was made by the leader with reference to appropriate reading material that was made available to them.

The second full session was related to "The Primary Needs of Young Children and the Role of Parents in Meeting Them."[4] The basic needs of all children were identified using as a guide "The Children's Charter." This charter, published in 1930 by the White House Conference on Children and Youth details fundamental needs of every child, rich or poor, in normal health or physically or mentally handicapped, of every race, color and station in life.

A short presentation was made, supplemented by case examples, of what happens when needs are not met. The group was particularly drawn to the premise that failure to meet needs often leads into paths of child placement away from the child's own parent. The prevailing opinion seemed to be that prents who fail their children to this extent should be punished. A lively discussion ensued on

4. See appendices for complete outline of the sessions.

the qualities of parenthood that seemed necessary to the group. This led into a discussion of parents who fail and what some of the factors might be that caused the failure. The group quickly came to a concensus that parents who fail have usually has an unsatisfying experience in growing up and that many are victims of their own life experiences.

In each of the groups this line of thinking led into a dialogue on the meaning of being a parent and a child's concept of his parent(s). The leader emphasized the depth of these feelings between parents and children and reminded the group of Sandy and the meaning his parents had for him at a very young age. One continued to have the feeling that the foster parents as a group accepted the concept that most parents want to be good parents but there was a residue of feeling that natural parents could find a way out of their dilemas without failing their children. The meaning of separation for children was brought up by the leader who emphasized the parents' role in helping a child make this transition wherever possible. Bowlby's "Separation Anxiety" was used to show some of the dramatic effects of separation in children. Foster parents were inclined to see only the outward effects of separation but believed these to be transitory. This led into a discussion of behavior changes stemming from the separation experience and there appeared to be the beginning of some understanding between separation and behavior patterns of children who had gone through this experience.

Facing problems in parenting children not one's own began the discussion for the third session on child care.[5] Some of the problems identified by the groups were:

5. See appendices for outline of the sessions.

1. The fact that care of foster children is tentative.

2. Frequent lack of knowledge of child's previous experience.

3. Shared responsibility between natural parent, agency and foster parent.

4. Coping with child's feeling of parental loss (shame over parent's inability to care).

5. Working with children whose sense of values had been marred.

6. Achieving a sense of responsibility for someone else's child.

7. The child's difficulty in relating appropriately to two sets of parents.

The teamwork approach to problem solving for children in foster care was emphasized and this brought forth considerable exchange between members of the group on the various responsibilities of team members. There was general agreement on what constituted responsibility for each member of the team including the social worker, the natural parent, and the foster parent.

By request from two of the three groups, we included in the last session, a discussion of principles found helpful in discipling children. There was a wide range of thinking on the part of foster parents in this area. The scale ran all the way from denial of need for discipline to persons who had extreme views on types of punishment. We concluded with the feeling that the gap had been considerably narrowed. This was accomplished through a very constructive interchange between group members with some direction by the leader.

2. Child Development

Approximately half of the time of this six-session workshop was devoted to human growth and development. In general, the material

covered in each of the three workshops on Human growth and development was similar; however there was a fair amount of variation because of shared experiences of the group and individual interests of the participants. The workshop sessions of 2½ hours duration provided time for group involvement. The first session covered principles of growth and development plus typical growth patterns from birth to age six years. With two of the groups, the film "Principles of Development"[6] was used. This film emphasized basic principles of growth, such as individual differences, orderliness of development, cephalo-caudel progression, and repetition for for mastery. Foster parents freely expressed their ideas about this film and cited their experiences. With one group time was spent discussing why it is important to understand how children grow and develop. An understanding of growth and development can fortify the child and parent at critical times and make it possible for parents to better accept the behavior of a child at a given age.

Since a number of the parents had had experience in caring for premature infants, some time was spent in discussing the challenges of prematurity. This included such aspects as feeding, respiration, temperature regulation. Apparently prematures are at times placed in select homes at an early age. It was interesting to observe the voluntary enthusiasm of these parents as they reported experiences they had had with the children in their care. Discipline was another area discussed very freely, particularly in regard to the two year olds during their "Negative" stage of development. Other related problems brought up in the first

6. See film bibliography

session were thumb sucking, excessive crying, toilet training, sleep habits, and relation of foster children to other children in the family. There was genuine concern from those who attended, for all children who for various reasons must be place in foster care at a very young age. The groups were warm and very anxious to do the best for children.

The second session of this workshop was devoted to the growth and development of the child during school age and adolescence. A majority of the parents had foster children of school age. As would be expected, there was considerable interest in school performance and much time was given to a discussion of why foster children may not compete as well academically, and may need extra home help. Emotional problems are undoubtedly present in many children during the school years, particularly in children who have been deprived of the security and support of their own parents. Ways for foster parents to accept the child without undue pressure and yet encourage his best performance entered into the discussion. The need for the child to be in good health and have his physical problems cared for was repeatedly brought out. Such areas as nutrition, good physical exercise and adequate rest and sleep were stressed. Ways by which these habits could be made a part of the child's every day life were mentioned by a number in the group. From the remarks in this session, it was clear that more time should be devoted to the child who is mentally retarded, handicapped, or in need of health care. We decided to allow time for covering problems of handicapped children during the final session of the workshop.

Adolescence, as expressed by several members of the group, was a difficult age for dealing with the foster child, but it was pleasing to note that the group generally had a warm and accepting attitude of the adolescent and his behavior. Some emphasis was places on the way the adolescent is seeking his own identification and independence. Thus, it becomes unusually difficult for foster parents to step in and take over the parent role. It is even difficult for well-meaning natural parents to relate well to their adolescents. In one group, considerable discussion came up concerning the role of the foster father. One of the participants gave the group the challenge to seek out the teenager who needs foster care. She, fortunately with the help of an understanding husband, had gotten much satisfaction from several teenagers who had been in her home as foster children. She emphasized the need for the father to be actively involved in the "management" of such adolescents.

The latter part of this session was spent in talking about specific health needs of all children. These included dental, nutritional, immunization, screening for vision, hearing, mental defects, and childhood illnesses. A timely topic was "how do you know when a child is sick" or what are the signs of illness that need medical attention. At the final or sixth sessions of the workshop, about 1 hour was devoted to many topics which the group presented plus other areas which for some reason had been omitted or because of limited time had not been included. Three particular areas were purposely worked into this final session: a) the handicapped child, including the mentally retarded child, b) the role of the health

team and the significance of other members of the health team other than the physician and c) services which are available through local health departments over the state and the proper way of obtaining these for foster children.

To reinforce the group's interest in growth and development, material were distributed and each individual was urged to keep these as references for the future.[7]

III. Summary

The series of workshops held for foster parents followed in general terms the content outline prepared by the teachers.[8] However, the sessions themselves were informal and there was not regidity in following the prepared outline. This was of valuable assistance to the foster parent participants. It allowed them to spend more time on those subjects of particular interest and concern to them.

The workshop leaders not only emphasized content but also encouraged the participants to engage in discussion of any item touched on that was of special concern to them. The informality allowed the participants to discuss issues pro and con with each other.

There was free expression of the feeling of the foster parents about the subject matter as well as discussion of concrete factual material.

Material prepared for discussion was simple and basic. The interest of the foster parents in a particular item frequently curtailed the time available for the presentation of the material prepared by the teacher.

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7. See Bibliography of materials provided for foster parents.
8. Refer to Content outline in Appendices.

It sometimes became necessary to touch only very lightly on some aspects of the material contained in the proposed outline.

IV. Evaluation

Evaluation sheets were sent to all participants after the second phase of the workshop program.[9] These evaluation sheets were unsigned, of one page length, and self-addressed stamped envelopes were provided. However, the response was very poor. Obviously the time lag between the first phase of the workshop and the request for the evaluation was too long. There was no response from this group. There were only six responses received from the sixteen foster parents involved in the second group. Thus the foster parents' evaluation of the meaning of the workshop cannot be well documented. This response makes it obvious that some kind of evaluation session and written evaluations should have been a part of the workshop content during the foster parents' attendance at the meeting.

It is interesting to note that of the six foster mothers who responded to the request for an evaluation, five indicated that they felt the sessions should have lasted longer and that the entire program should have extended for more than six sessions. They felt that we were only able to touch the surface in these six sessions and did not have time to go into specific problem areas. Only one responding foster mother indicated that she felt the sessions had been long enough and that the entire workshop had lasted for an adequate period of time. There were suggestions of specific problem areas such as the disturbed child and sexual behavior. There were also a number of suggestions for using additional pamphlets and

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9. Refer to Evaluation sheet in Appendices.

booklets and for making more written material available to the foster parents. It was learned that reading material should be explained and explained thoroughly with the group.

The foster mothers were asked whether or not their husbands would have attended had the workshop been held in the evening hours. Of the limited group who responded, four indicated that they felt their husbands would have come and two that they would not. It was not possible to get an adequate or thorough evaluation from agency caseworkers about their evaluation of the foster parents' gains from attendance. There were so many staff changes during this period that there was no one person who could follow through with foster parents before, during and after the workshop sessions. It has been possible in a few instances to obtain reports from the supervising caseworker. These general evaluations have indicated that it is felt foster parents were given a lot of material to think about and that many were able to modify some of their attitudes relating to natural parents and to have some better understanding of children's needs.

The teachers and consultants in the workshop definitely felt that bringing the foster parents together as a group aided their cohesiveness. It helped them to think about themselves in relation to other foster parents and aided them in recognizing that they were not alone with their problems. It was also obvious that the foster parents gained recognition from the program and that they were able to see the importance of their job both to the child and the agency because of the fact of and the discussions during the workshop.[10]

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10. See Newspaper Publicity in Appendices.

It appeared during the course of discussion that some foster parents were able to modify their feelings and thinking about some aspects of foster care. Certainly they gained factual information which should be of assistance to them as foster parents in the care of children. In addition, some, for the first time, were able to think through some of their thoughts and feelings about natural parents, children's interest in their parents, the right of the child to visit, etc. Discussions among the group members, themselves, revealed some of their negative feelings in relation to some aspects of foster care and at least partly gave them food for thought surrounding some of these areas.

V. Recommendations

The following are recommendations for any future plans for workshops.

1. It is felt that efforts should be made to increase the attendance of the foster fathers at the meetings. It is unfortunate when the mothers gain knowledge and insight that is not at the same time available to the foster fathers. They also need increased awareness of their role as foster fathers and to gain some increased recognition, as do the foster mothers, of their importance and of the reality of their jobs.
2. It is recommended that individual sessions be scheduled for a minimum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. In most instances the sessions did extend beyond the two hour limit. Our experience indicated that the duration of the workshop, that is six weeks, was satisfactory.
3. Obviously some foster parents did not participate in the workshop because of the problem in arranging and/or paying for

transportation. In future sessions, it is hoped that some effort can be made to assist foster parents in arranging transportation so that they may benefit from the sessions.

4. It is likewise considered important that some child care plan be made if foster parents are to give their time to this program. Plans must be made for preschool children and/or school ages depending on the time of the workshop. This would enable additional foster parents to attend and those attending to give their undivided thought and time during the hours of the workshop.

5. It is obvious that the agency's staff should be prepared prior to the workshop for the process of the workshop itself. If the staff is to encourage foster parents to attend, they need to be sold on the values to be gained from the workshop. In addition, they need a clear understanding of what will be going on during the workshop and what information will be gained by the foster parents. They must feel a part of the program and they must not be threatened by the thought of others working with their foster parents. It is recommended that local agency staff be given a ccuple of hours at which time the entire plan for the workshop would be briefly presented and there would be ample opportunity for discussion.

6. It is further recommended that the participants be divided into smaller discussion groups either as a part of the workshop, or following the workshop, to take up specialized subject areas. For example, there may be a group of foster parents who care for the premature and newborn infant. They have special questions and problems that are unrelated to the needs of the other foster parents, If the group were so divided, additional information could be given to them and additional discussions could be held.

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Parents Manual: A Guide to Emotional Development of Young Children, by Anna M. Wolf.

"Ross Developmental Aid Booklets", a series of 20 pamphlets, 1967.

Spock, Benjamin, Baby and Child Care, Pocket Books, Inc. (1961), 630 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10020 (627 pp) (50 cents).

"The Child Who is Mentally Retarded," Children's Bureau, Folder No. 43-1956, 1967.

The Story of Sandy (A Signet Book) The New American Library, New York, N. Y. 1955, Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 3 W. 57th St., N. Y., N. Y. 10019. 126 pp.

B. Films Bibliography

A Family for Now (Jewish Child Care Assn.)		Black and White
Answering the Child's Whys (Encyclopedia Britannica Films, 1951)	14 minutes	Black and White
Child Care and Development (McGraw-Hill Book Co.)	15 minutes	Black and White
Debbie (Health and Welfare Materials Center)		Color
Embryology of Human Behavior (International Film Bureau, Inc., 1951)	28 minutes	Color
Fears of Children (International Film Bureau, Inc., 1951)	30 minutes	Black and white
From Ten to Twelve (McGraw Hill Book Co., 1957)	26 minutes	Black and White
Frustrating Fours and Fascinating Fives (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1952)	22 minutes	Black and White
If These Were Your Children, Parts I, II (Associated Films, Inc.)	28, 21 minutes	Black and White
Journey in Health (Smart Family Foundation, 1960)	22 minutes	Color
Life With Baby (March of Time Forum Films, 1948)	18 minutes	Black and White
No Stranger as to Kin (Inter-Church Audio Visual Aids)		Color
Phenomena of Early Development, The (Ross Laboratories)	13 minutes	Black and White
Preface to a Life (Norwood Studies, Inc., 1950)	28 minutes	Black and White
Principles of Development (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1949)	15 minutes	Black and White
Problem Children (New York University Film Library, 1947)	20 minutes	Black and White
Ready for School (Michigan Dept. of Health)	18 minutes	Color

Sociable Sixes to Noisy Nines (McGraw-Hill Book Co.)	22 minutes	Black and White
Social Development (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950)	15 minutes	Black and White
Terrible Twos and Trusting Threes (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950)	20 minutes	Black and White
The Deep Well (Health and Welfare Materials Center)		Black and White
The Lostling (Florida Department of Public Welfare)		Color
The Neglected (International Film Bureau, Inc.)		Black and White

VII. Appendices

A. Course Outline for Participants

WORKSHOP FOR FOSTER PARENTS

(Under proposal GC 1466 621 L - Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965)

SPONSOR: Department of Sociology
Department of Adult Education

LOCAL SPONSORS: State Department of Family and Children Services in Cooperation with County Departments of Family and Children Services

PARTICIPANTS: Agency Supervised Foster Mothers

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Mr. Fred E. Parsons, Assistant Professor of Sociology
West Georgia College

INSTRUCTORS: Dr. Lillian Warnick, Pediatric Consultant
Georgia Department of Public Health
47 Trinity Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30326

Mr. James K. Vaughn
2185 Marann Drive., N. E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

PURPOSE: To improve the rearing of foster children in present and prospective foster homes

COST TO PARTICIPANTS: There is no charge for the workshop. We believe that value of the workshop will be increased by the regular attendance of each participant.

Teaching Materials

1. Film "The Lostling"
2. Blackboard
3. Kits of material provided for project
4. A Foster Parent's Handbook
5. Reading List
6. Evaluation Guide to be completed after each two-hour period
7. Live case material

Learning Experiences

1. Participating in group discussion
2. Reading selected materials
3. Analyzing behavior as to cause and effect
4. One-to-one relationship in problem solving
5. Listening groups - on assignment basis for visual aids.

Content Outline

I. Welcome and Introductions
   - A. Individual introductions of participants
   - B. Talk by Project Director
   - C. Introduction of staff and brief comments by them

II. Introduction of film and previewing group on what to listen for, etc,
   - A. Brief discussion of film led by Mr. Vaughn

III. Distribution of kits with comments on use.

IV. Social time sponsored by local department

V. Adjournment.

Second Session

Topic: Foster Parents in Today's World.

I. A brief overview of the history of foster care and changes that have occured.

II. Group discussion of individual's concept of her job, including statement of the most satisfying thing about being a foster parent, and the most unsatisfying aspect of caring for children.

III. Presentation of agency expectations in foster parents --- the qualities that are necessary and desirable for parenting children not one's own.

IV. A review of a foster parent record with members of the group assessing strengths and weaknesses. Evaluating the effectiveness of foster parents (from record).

V. Group identification of personality traits making for "good Parenting".

VI. The foster parent as a team member on the Department's staff. Brief presentation on how foster parents and workers plan together in behalf of children.

VII. Time permitting - Book report from member of group on "The Story of Sandy" (a true story of how one foster mother helped a child regain a sense of identity and purpose).

VIII. Preview of next week's discussion relating such preview to todays's discussion.

Third Session

Topic: Primary Needs of Children and the Role of Parents in Meeting Them.

I. Basic needs of all children "The Children's Charter" - (a chart published by the 1930 White House Conference detailing fundamental needs of every child, rich or poor, in normal health or physically or mentally handicapped, of every race, color and station in life).

II. Short presentation on what happens when needs are not met. (Using case examples).

III. Delination of causes that lead into paths of child placement away from own parents - (individuals in group ideas supplemented by leader).

IV. Recall session on the meaning of a parent to a child and the meaning of children to parents.

V. The meaning of separation to children and their parents - Foster parents' role in helping child make this transition - Some do's and don'ts for best results.

Fourth Session

The Child from birth to School Age.

I. Principles of growth and development - to include such items as individual differences, orderliness of development, cephalo-caudel progression (develops from head downward) repetition for mastery.

II. Why we need to know how childern grow and develop:
(1) Fortify child and parent at critical times.
(2) Can understand and better accept behavior at a given age.

III. Discussion of infant, toddler and pre-schooler - growth and development.

IV. "Problems" mothers most often discuss with the physician or nurse during the years 1-6 (will also allow time for questions and comments).

Fifth Session

The Child - School Age and Adolescent

I. The school age child - his growth and development.

II. The adolescent.

III. Meeting health needs of children.
1. Dental
2. Nutritional
3. Immunizations
4. Screening for defects - as vision, hearing
5. Childhood illness

Sixth Session - Final Session

The Foster Child and His Unique Problems

I. Identification of problems that are different from ones we might encounter with children born to us.

II. A teamwork approach to problem-solving in child care - The Foster Parent and the agency representative.

III. Principles found helpful in discipling children.

IV. "The only limit to our realization of tommorrow will be our doubts today Let us move forward with strong and active faith." - Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

V. Role of the health team and need for health supervision for all children.

VI. The handicapped child - especially the mentally retarded.

VII. Services for children which usually are available in local health department.

MEMOS FROM YOUR CHILD

1. Don't spoil me. I know quite well I ought not to have all is ask for. I am only testing you.
2. Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it, it makes me feel more secure.
3. Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them in the early stages.
4. Don't make me feel smaller than I am. It only makes me behave stupidly "big".
5. Don't correct me in front of people if you can help it. I'll take much more notice if you talk quitely in private.
6. Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn the painful way sometimes.
7. Don't make me feel my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.
8. Don't be too upset when I say "I hate you." It isn't you I hate, but your power to thwart me.
9. Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. Sometimes they get me the attention I need.
10. Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
11. Don't make rash promises. Remember that I feel badly let down when promises are broken.
12. Don't forget that I cannot explain myself as well as I should like. This is why I'm not always very accurate.
13. Don't tax my honesty too much. I'm easily frightened into telling lies.
14. Don't push (put) me off when I ask questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.

15. Don't tell me my fears are silly. They are terribly real and you can do much to reassure me, if you try to understand.

16. Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too great a shock when I discover that you are neither.

17. Don't be inconsistent. It completely confuses me and makes me lose my faith in you.

18. Don't ever think it is beneath your dignity to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me surprisingly warm towards you.

19. Don't forget I love experimenting. I couldn't get on without it, so please put up with it.

20. Don't forget how quickly I am growing up. It must be very difficult for you to keep pace with me, but please try.

21. Don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of understanding love, but I don't need to tell you, do I?

ANONYMOUS AUTHOR
Submitted by ...
Mrs. Edith Johnson

PLEDGE TO CHILDREN

TO YOU, our children, who hold within you our most cherished hopes, we the members of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, relying on your full response, make this pledge:

From your earlist infancy we give you our love, so that you may grow with trust in yourself and in others.

We will recognize your worth as a person and we will help you to strengthen your sense of belonging.

We will respect your right to be yourself and at the same time help you to understand the rights of others, so that you may experience cooperative living.

We will help you to develop initiative and imagination, so that you may have the opportunity freely to create.

We will encourage your curiosity and your pride in workmanship, so that you may have the satisfaction that comes from achievement.

We will provide the conditions for wholesome play that will add to your learning, to your social experience, and to your happiness.

We will illustrate by precept and example the value of integrity and the importance of moral courage.

We will encourage you always to seek the truth.

We will provide you with all opportunities possible to develop your own faith in God.

We will open the way for you to enjoy the arts and to use them for deepening your understanding of life.

We will work to rid ourselves of prejudice and discrimination, so that together we may achieve a truly democratic society.

We will work to lift the standard of living and to improve our economic practices so that you may have the material basis for a full life.

We will provide you with rewarding educational opportunities, so that you may develop your talents and contribute to a better world.

We will protect you against exploitation and undue hazards and help you grow in health and strength.

We will work to conserve and improve family life and, as needed, to provide foster care according to your inherent rights.

We will intensify our search for new knowledge in order to guide you more effectively as you develop your potentialities.

As you grow from child to youth to adult, establishing a family life of your own and accepting larger social responsibilities, we will work with you to improve conditions for all children and youth.

Aware that these promises to you cannot be fully met in a world at war, we ask you to join us in a firm dedication to the building of a world society based on freedom, justice and mutual respect.

SO MAY YOU grow in joy, in faith in God and in man, and in those qualities of vision and of the spirit that will sustain us all and give us new hope for the future.

B. Content Outline

NOTES ON FILM

"The Lostling"

Cause for coming into foster child.

Characteristics of parenting

Both foster mother and foster father have role to play

Understanding of both

Consistent

(Problems of withdrawal, intimidated, eating properly)

Mother helped to eat

Insecurity

Abandonment over and over again

"Right to Know" - Re: Grandmother

Visit with worker - planning together with worker.

Work with natural mother

Reluctance to talk

Right to visit between child and natural parents

Why parents fail their children - Experiences

Non-accusing worker - dwell on positives

What were mother's strengths

Avoid old friends

Interested in change

Agreed to support - work

Interested in child

Desire to see and visit

Note foster mother rate in preparing child for visit with mother.

How did mother show love - by giving

"Why did you leave me?"

Goodbyes

Upset following visit with mother.

Temper tantrums - need for control - attention and understanding -

Investment of foster parents -

Feelings of abandonment all over again when mother did not meet appointment.

Foster mother's concern about child's emotional well being.

Mother slips - never without slips

Hostility of mother toward worker and self

Role of worker with natural parents and child

Child plans to return home

Work with court

Ultimate objective -

Help child learn to be a successful parent

Final scene foster mother and foster father

Helps prepare child

Satisfaction

Questions for discussion -

Preview No. 1 - How were foster parents used?
What would you add to responsibilities?
Did they do anything that was new to your way of thinking?
(Detail all things seen)

No. 2 - Describe problems child brought into care and how foster parent coped with them.

No. 3 - See if you can find a key sentence for purpose in all work with children.

I. Brief overview of history of foster care

A. Prior to 18th Century - Relatives
B. 18th Century Poor Laws - Industrialization
   1. Poor Houses
   2. Orphans' Homes - Parents died young
   3. Indenture - Groups
C. 19th Century - Humane approach to care
   1. Child's rights were not as well protected as animals (Story of starved child in New York City, plea on ground that she was an animal.)
   2. Labor laws heralded first break in massive shield that covered children and their guardian
      Outlawing "Sweat Shops" - Indenture
   3. Trend toward getting children out of large institutions and into homes .....
D. The foster family care period
   1. Complete swing toward foster family care with emphasis on economics as compared to institution or congregate care -
   2. Crowding of homes and increasing inability to give good care - Poor Pay - Poor supervision by agencies.
   3. The Maas Study - 1962 - Findings
      a. Children lost in foster care - no contacts with parents
      b. Loss sense of identity - Who am I?
   4. A saner approach based on need of children

II. Identify Purposes of Foster Care
   A. Foster Mother's concept of job. (Be sure all these mentioned)
      1. Substitute parenting - Never takes place of parent
      2. Providing Physical Care - (Food, clothing, housing)
      3. Providing emotional care (Warmth, love, understanding)
      4. Other aspects of parenting.....
         a. Training and Discipling
         b. Spiritual Nurturing
         c. Educating
   B. The most satisfying aspect of job
   C. The most unsatisfying aspect of job

III. Agency Expectations of Foster Parents
   A. The Study of the Foster Home
      1. Purpose is to get to know families and their particular qualification for foster parenting. Not all natural parents make good foster parents.
      2. Physical Features of Home
         a. How many can be served
      3. The motive in caring for other's children
         a. Healthy VS Unhealthy attitudes

Love of children		To replace one's own
Desire to share	-	To make money
Compassion		To correct a problem in own family
		Loneliness
		Barreness - Adoptive idea

4. Ability to cooperate with others in sharing responsibility for another's child.
5. Assessment of Parenting Ability
   a. Previous experience
   b. Ability to learn and "change"

B. Reevaluation of Joint Responsibility
1. Review of Agreement or Contract
2. Evaluate experiences and identify ways of improving
3. Redetermine children to be cared for and under what conditions

IV. Personality Traits of the Successful Foster Parent
A. Establish small groups to come up with ideas - Put on board -
B. Following should be included -
(Warm, Kind, Considerate, Firm, Understanding, Ability to Communicate verbally and by example, Acceptance of child as he is, (and pareents), Enthusiastic, Faithful and/or Loyal Truthful

V. Book Report on Sandy -
A. Emphasis traits of foster mother and the role she played

VI. The Foster Parent and Agency Working together for Children
A. A joint responsibility - Each has his job to do
B. Can we separate the role of each?

Agency	Foster Parent
1. Link with past	1. Providing day-to-day care
2. Planning child's future	2. Training child
3. Developing Funds for Care	3. Parenting
4. Making Use of Community Resources in behalf of child	4. Cooperation with Agency in Planning for and with child
5. Specific work with child	5. Physical and Emotional Needs

PRIMARY NEEDS (RIGHTS) OF CHILDREN

I. A "One-to-One" Relationship
   - A. Meaning of Phrase
   - B. As the child grows a broadening ability to relate - "to Love"
   - C. Later "good experiences do not destroy effects of earlier poor ones Nor does exceptionally good experience with one parent compensate for other.
   - D. Adequate mothering is essential to the development of normal, health boys and girls - it involves continuous, consistent care and as soon as possible after birth - Importance of first weeks.

II. A Firm Faith in God - Ideals "A Faith to Live by ....."
   - A. To help under the pressures of life
   - B. A concept of reaching out rather than internalizing feelings Need to find better way of transmitting.
   - C. Sense of values - things important in life.
   - D. A personal philosophy incorporating "The Golden Rule"

III. A Home for Every Child
   - A. His own home wherever possible and a substitute when not possible.
   - B. Home provides a sense of Identification
   - C. Home provides a sense of Security
     A Place of Love and acceptance

IV. A Healthy Life
   - A. Includes prenatal, natal and post-natal care
   - B. Periodical Health examinations and where needed specialist's care
   - C. Regular Dental Treatment
   - D. Pure food and drug supply including water

V. An Education
   - A. Includes preschool experience as a supplement to home care and preparation for 1st grade
   - B. Opportunities for advanced training suitable to abilities and interests
   - C. Special provisions for the handicapped or exceptional child

VI. A Healthy Community
   - A. Free from hazards, physical dangers, disease
   - B. Safe place to play and adequate recreation

VII. Preparation for Parenthood
   - A. Includes helping childs own parent understand parenting
   - B. Home making
   - C. Personal example
   - D. Rights and responsibilities of citizenship

VIII. A Right to Economic Security
   - A. Minimal flooring to maintain dignity and respect
   - B. Stable income

IX. Protection against labor that
   A. Stunts growth limits education
   B. Deprives children of the right of comradship, play and of joy

X. A Sense of Personal Worth
   A. Sense of Belonging - a person of value
   B. Role of parents
   C. Role of Social Workers
   D. Statements of tragedy
      "I don't care what happens to me"
      "I'm just not any good"
   E. There is good in all children

XI. A Sense of Security
   A. An anchor during troubled times
   B. Family-life, when healthy, provides this. There may be want and suffering but when family remains intact, and unified, there is a sense of well-being.

XII. A Respect for Authority
   A. The current scene - Revolt against authority
   B. Home should teach obedience to authority - This is where basic feelings about it are learned
   C. All of us need-regardless of rank or station in life
   D. Best example - Our Lord - who commanded obedience to Civil Authority and who himself Surrendered.

I. When Needs are not met

A. Identify what happens

Food
Clothing
Good Parenting
Education
One to one Relationship
Recreation
Responsibility
Authority
Sense of Security
Religious Training
Feeling of Being Wanted (Loved)

II. Foster Parents and Agency working together in behalf of children (In meeting Needs)

Agency	Foster Parent
1. Link with Past	1. Providing day to day care
2. Planning child's Future	2. Training child
3. Developing Funds for Care	3. Parenting
4. Making Use of Community Resources for Child	4. Cooperative with Agency in Planning for and with child
5. Specific work with child	5. Physical & Emotional Needs

III. Problems we face in working with foster children differing from our own.

1. Tentative care
2. Lack of Knowledge of Child's previous experiences
3. Shared Responsibility
4. Psychology of Parenthood (Children expect it)
5. Experience of Parental Loss (Shame over parent's ability to care)
6. A person without sense of values
7. Lack of responsibility toward someone else's child
8. Identification with two sets of parents (Feeling of guilt on part of child)

C. Evaluation Form

1. In What Ways Have You Found the Workshop for Foster Parents Helpful to You?

2. What Part Did You Like the Most?

3. What Part Did you Like the Least?

4. Have You Had an Opportunity to Read Any of the Literature That You Received?
Yes_____ No_____

Which Book or Pamphlet Did You Like the Best?

5. What Changes Would You Suggest If we Repeat This Workshop for Another Group?

6. Do You Think That the workshop Sessions Should Have Been Longer or Shorter; Should the Entire Program Have Lasted More than Six Sessions?

7. What other Areas of Discussion Would You Like to See Included in the Program?

8. What Areas that we Discussed Would You Want Excluded From Another Sessinn?

9. Do You Think Your Husband Would Have Attended the Workshop if it Had Been Scheduled in the Evening? Yes_____ NO_____

10. Make any Suggestions or Comments That You Think Would be Helpful to us in Planning a Future Workshop for Foster Parents.

D. Newspaper Publicity

ADDING LOVE IS FOSTER PARENT'S JOB

By Marilyn Mayes
Journal Staff Writer

Sharing love with "temporary" children has become a way of life for some 51 families in Cobb County.

To help these foster parents do a better job in offering an interim home to youngsters separated from their natural parents, a special seminar is being sponsored by the Cobb County Department of Family and Children's Services and West Georgia College.

How to help children adjust to their new homes, how to deal with their problems and how to prepare the children and their foster parents for imminent separation are a few of the topics which have been discussed at the weekly conferences.

The study program is being coordinated by Fred Parsons of West Georgia College, which obtained a federal grant to conduct the program. Guest teachers have been Dr. Lillian Warnick, a consultant in pediatrics and James Vaughn, Children's Bureau representative of the regional Department of Health, Education and Welfare Office.

Among those attending the sessions held at the Main County Health Office are Mrs. Robert G. Walker of Smyrna and Mrs. M. M. Wilson of Marietta. Both women have been foster parents for the past three years.

During this time Mrs. Walker has been a temporary mother to three youngsters while Mrs. Wilson has been called "Mom" by 20 children.

Both are devoted to their work and feel the seminar has greatly helped them to cope with their special job.

"I think I really do better understand children's problems and how to cope with them," says Mrs. Wilson who currently has five foster children in addition to three teenagers of her own.

Mrs. Walker, who is now temporary mother to a 10 year old girl, said the conferences have most helped her to understand the nature of her job.

"All children need love and care and it's wonderful to have an opportunity to give attention to youngsters who might otherwise have to do without these essentials during a family crisis," she says.

Mrs. Wilson said she felt "called" to her work and she received great personal satisfaction from being a foster parent.

"I am so lonesome when one leaves that I don't feel full again until I get another child," She says. "My own children love having extra brothers and sisters and want to help look after the little ones."

Both women say their husbands enjoy the foster children as much as they do. "We couldn't do it without the men," they agree.

Mrs. Walker, who has no children of her own, says she most enjoys seeing the youngesters progress and learn.

"One four-year-old child came to us with a vocabulary of about 10 words, but mainly whe said 'no'," Mrs. Wlaker said. "She couldn't speak sentences at all. After she had been with us awhile, she came in from playing with friends and said, 'Mommy, I think you're a bit nutty'".

"I was so delighted she had said a sentence I really didn't care what she said," Mrs. Walker said with a laugh.

No matter how many ofster children they have, the Wilsons try to carry on a normal home life.

"Everything runs as usual except on a bigger scale. We take all the children on vacations, urge them to have their friends visit and make them feel as if they belong with us."

The only difficult part about being a foster parent, the two women agree, is giving up the children. A foster child may stay with a family from several weeks to several years. Most are returned to their natural parents once illness, emotional problems or whatever constituted the crisis that made removal of the children necessary, is over. Other children are adopted into permanent homes.

"No matter how many times it happens or how many courses you take, its always hard to give up a child," said Mrs. Wilson. "But I trust in the Lord to help me and He does."

"When you become attached to a child, it is terribly hard to see him go, but you realize he is better off with his real parents," Mrs. Walker said.

Cobb County currently has a total of 98 children placed in foster homes throughout the county. Foster parents are volunteers in a sense, according to Miss Nancy Pendergraft of the state Family and Children's Service Department, because they receive no pay. The state provides shelter and food money for the children, but this amounts to less than $ 3. per day, she explained. The state, however, does pay for medical and dental care and school supplies.

Only couples may become foster parents, Miss Pendergraft said. They must have an income of their own, the mother must not be employed outside the home, they must be in good health, have adequate space to take care of children and be between the ages of 25 and 60.

Foster parents may take care of as many children as they can provide for. Most have more than one child at a time, according to Miss Pendergraft.

FAMILY WITH 102 CHILDREN QUESTIONS SHOE LADY'S WOES

Douglas County Sentinel

"Foster Parents" Given Course In

How to Raise "Children"

The Old Lady Who Lived In A Shoe was a piker compared to some standards being set in Douglas County. For example, could she measure up to the Jesse Whitley family which is planning a reunion for their 102 "Children".

Or how would she stack up to Mr. and Mrs. James H. Gosnell who boast a family of 84 "children".

As a matter of fact, there are numerous homes in Douglas County that would put the little old lady "who didn't know what to do" to shame. The lady of nursery rhyme has only one claim to fame and that is the dubious distinction of having made her abode in a shoe.

Mrs. Elaine Riley, director, Douglas County Department of Family and Children Services, has pointed out that presently there are 19 "foster homes" in Douglas County which care for scores of children.

These parents are now undergoing extensive training in a workshop being conducted for "foster parents."

Instructors are Dr. Lillian Warnick, pediatric Consultant, Georgia Department of Public Health and James K. Vaughn, Atlanta. The classes are being sponsored by the Adult Education Department of West Georgia College. Anyone can attend the classes on Monday between the hours of 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. in the courthouse.

"Throughout the state, Douglas County is known to many as a county with a heart," Mrs. Riley stated.

"Credit for this goes to the dedicated people in the county who have opened their homes to children who for various reasons had to be cared for away from their own homes," she explained. These gracious hosts are known as "foster parents" and each home is sponsored by the Department of Family and Children Services.

Contrary to what is commonly believed, very few of these children have been orphans. Most have been removed from their parents by the courts because of neglect or abuse.

Some are placed in foster homes because the parents can no longer exercise control and the children are becoming deliquents. Other children were voluntarily placed with the agency because of illness of the parents.

An there are cases where the parents have abandoned the children and relatives could not provide homes for them.

Currently the 19 homes are caring for 45 children ranging in age from a few days old to 18. There is a quick turnover in homes with most of the children remaining for only a few months.

The foster homes are supposed to provide care for a temporary period only in order that the agency can have time to develop a more permanent placement plan for the child.

"However," Mrs. Riley stated, "for some children it has not been possible to make other plans. Consequently, they have remained in their foster home for as much as six or seven years."

Many of the foster parents have been caring for children through the agency for a long time. The record is held by Mr. and Mrs. Whitley who first made application to board children in 1950.

Mrs. Whitley says, "This is our life's work." She says that caring for other children does not interfere with the lives of her own three children.

"They go to school after we get another child and tell their friends that they have another 'brother' or 'sister'."

"It (taking care of children in need) helps us as much as it does them," Mrs. Whitley confesses. She says that she has no trouble with discipline. "I'm a pretty good talker and most of the time I can get them to see things my way."

At present the Whitleys are caring for a six year old, a two year old and an infant. They all seem to be delighted with the arrangement and no doubt tears will come when they separate.

Six children is the maximum permitted by the agency. This includes the foster parents own children. As in the case of most rules, there are exceptions. Sometimes more than this will be allowed to let brothers and sisters stay in the same house.

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on Adult Education